

Remarks on Signing the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001

June 7, 2001

Thank you. Sit down. Behave yourself. You're at the White House. *[Laughter]*

Laura, thank you very much for being here on this historic moment. Mr. Vice President, Secretary O'Neill, Director Daniels, Secretary Evans and Chao are here, as well. Secretary Abraham, Administrator Christine Todd Whitman, Members of the United States Senate, Members of the House of Representatives, fellow Americans, welcome.

Some months ago, in my speech to the joint session of Congress, I had the honor of introducing Steven Ramos to the Nation. Steven is the network administrator for a school district. His wife, Josefina, teaches at a charter school. They have a little girl named Lianna. And they're trying to save for Lianna's college education.

High taxes made saving difficult. Last year they paid nearly \$8,000 in Federal income taxes. Well, today we're beginning to make life for the Ramos' a lot easier. Today we start to return some of the Ramos' money and not only their money but the money of everybody who paid taxes in the United States of America.

Across the board tax relief does not happen often in Washington, DC. In fact, since World War II, it has happened only twice: President Kennedy's tax cut in the sixties and President Reagan's tax cuts in the 1980s. And now it's happening for the third time, and it's about time.

A year ago tax relief was said to be a political impossibility. Six months ago it was supposed to be a political liability. Today it becomes reality. It becomes reality because of the bipartisan leadership of the Members of the United States Congress: Members like Bill Thomas of California, Ralph Hall of Texas, Charles Grassley of Iowa, Max Baucus of Montana, Zell Miller of Georgia, John Breaux of Louisiana, Trent Lott of Mississippi, and the entire leadership team in the Senate and Denny Hastert of Illinois and the leadership team in the House of Representatives; some Democrats, many Republicans,

who worked tirelessly and effectively to produce this important result.

I also want to pay tribute to the members of my administration who worked with Congress to bring about this day: Vice President Cheney, Secretary O'Neill, Director Daniels, and the team inside the White House of Andy Card and Larry Lindsey, Nick Calio and their staffs.

With us today are 15 of the many families I met as I toured our country making the case for tax relief—hard-working Americans. I was able to talk about their stories and their struggles and their hopes, which made the case for tax relief much stronger than my words could possibly convey. And I want to thank you all for coming.

And here at the White House today are representatives of millions of Americans, including labor union members, small-business owners, and family farmers. Your persistence and determination helped bring us to this day. The American people should be proud of your efforts on their behalf, and I personally thank you all for coming.

Tax relief is a great achievement for the American people. Tax relief is the first achievement produced by the new tone in Washington, and it was produced in record time. Tax relief is an achievement for families struggling to enter the middle class. For hard-working lower income families, we have cut the bottom rate of Federal income tax from 15 percent to 10 percent. We doubled the per-child tax credit to \$1,000 and made it refundable. Tax relief is compassionate, and it is now on the way.

Tax relief is an achievement for middle class families squeezed by high energy prices and credit card debt. Most families can look forward to a \$600 tax rebate before they have to pay the September back-to-school bills. And in the years ahead, taxpayers can look forward to steadily declining income tax rates.

Tax relief is an achievement for families that want the Government tax policy to be fair and not penalize them for making good choices, good choices such as marriage and raising a family. So we cut the marriage penalty.

Tax relief makes the code more fair for small businesses and farmers and individuals

by eliminating the death tax. Over the long haul, tax relief will encourage work and innovation. It will allow American workers to save more on their pension plan or individual retirement accounts. Tax relief expands individual freedom. The money we return, or don't take in the first place, can be saved for a child's education, spent on family needs, invested in a home or in a business or a mutual fund or used to reduce personal debt.

The message we send today: It's up to the American people; it's the American people's choice. We recognize, loud and clear, the surplus is not the Government's money. The surplus is the people's money, and we ought to trust them with their own money.

This tax relief plan is principled. We cut taxes for every income tax payer. We target nobody in; we target nobody out. And tax relief is now on the way.

Today is a great day for America. It is the first major achievement of a new era, an era of steady cooperation. And more achievements are ahead. I thank the Members of Congress in both parties who made today possible. Together, we will lead our country to new progress and new possibilities.

It is now my honor to sign the first broad tax relief in a generation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. H.R. 1836, approved June 7, was assigned Public Law No. 107-16.

Remarks to the Fourth National Summit on Fatherhood

June 7, 2001

Thank you all very much for that warm welcome. It's an honor to be introduced by Tommy Thompson, who not only was an outstanding Governor but, I can assure you, is going to be an outstanding Secretary of Health and Human Services. He is bright, capable, smart, and does everything the President tells him. *[Laughter]* He's my buddy. But thank you, Tommy, very much.

I am so honored Members of the United States Congress are here. I appreciate you all being here, Senator Carper, Senator Bayh, Congressman J.C. Watts. If there are other Members of the Congress here, thank you

all for coming, as well. Roland Warren, it's good to meet you, sir. I appreciate your focus and effort. I've got something to say about the other two characters up here in a minute. *[Laughter]*

For 7 years, the National Fatherhood Initiative has been a powerful voice for responsible fatherhood. And for those of you involved, on behalf of our Nation, I say thanks from the bottom of our collective hearts. You have generated grassroots support and important national awareness. You've encouraged public officials like me to think and act on this incredibly important issue.

I worked with many of you on the Texas Fatherhood Initiative. We created a statewide public awareness campaign, mobilized community and corporate leadership, established a Texas Fatherhood Resource Center, and lent support to grassroots organizations all across our great State.

Promoting fatherhood was a commitment I made as Governor; it's a commitment I make as President; and it's a commitment I have made every day since our little girls were born in Dallas, Texas.

Two people who have been a central part of the National Fatherhood Initiative are now a valuable part of my administration, the Deputy Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Don Eberly, and the Acting Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services—and, we hope, a man confirmed soon—Wade Horn. *[Applause]* I was pleased to see Senator Carper leading the applause. *[Laughter]* Thank you, guys, for your service, and thank you for your willingness to work on behalf of the American people.

The intellectual roots of the fatherhood movement reach back to one exceptional public servant who spoke about the importance of fathers earlier, more often, and more eloquently than any other public figure, former United States Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York. Now, the fatherhood movement counts amongst its supporters a variety of public officials: Republicans Tom Ridge and Secretary of State Colin Powell; great Democrats, like Al Gore and Joe Lieberman.

Most States now have initiatives that promote responsible fatherhood, and more than